

THE REV. DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

Statement by U.S. Senator Benjamin L. Cardin

January 2009

Today we celebrate the birth of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., who was born 80 years ago this year. We are living in historic times and as we join together to celebrate the Inauguration of President Barack Obama, we also pause to remember the legacy of the Dr. King and we pledge to rededicate ourselves to his vision of equality, fairness, and justice.

We are nation of 300 million people; a nation in which one-out-of-three Americans is a member of a minority group. President-elect Obama is a symbol of the tremendous progress we have made. Barack Obama understands -- just as Dr. King understood -- that our diversity is one of our greatest strengths, and also one of our most important challenges.

As we celebrate the life of Dr. King, we reaffirm our commitment to find a way to work and live together and to respect each other. Dr. King's legacy of social justice charted the path for us. As he once said: "We must learn to live together as brothers or perish together as fools."

As we begin a new chapter on our nation's history, we look to the future with hope, determination and pride – pride that our nation has made progress in the fight for equality. But we also temper that pride with a promise that we will honor the memory of Dr. King by continuing the fight against bigotry and intolerance. We can do no less.